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STUDENTS ORGANIZE PEACE CONFERENCE, AWARDS CEREMONY



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Each year the student Peace Studies Society at Ohio State organizes a speaking event and awards ceremony to recognize the efforts of undergraduates who have contributed to the cause of peace and justice.

This year almost 70 people attended a half-day conference held January 24 at the Mershon Center.



Sessions at the conference included "Speak Peace in a World of Conflict," with **Tom Carlisi** and **Jeff Brown** of the Center for Compassionate Communication, and "Peace through Service in Rotary," with the Rotaract Club of OSU.

A human rights panel and discussion included **Patrick Coy**, director of the Center for Applied Conflict Management at Kent State University; **Julie Hart**, professor of sociology and peace and justice at Ohio Dominican University; and **John Carlarne**, peace studies coordinator at the Mershon Center.

Integral to the conference was the Student Peace Award, given by the Peace Studies Society with support from the Mershon Center. **Lauren Chen** (pictured), a biomedical science major at Ohio State, was recognized for her work to empower children in the slums of Lenana, Kenya, through education and civic engagement.

Students applied or were nominated through an online process in which they were asked to describe their contributions to peace in the local and global community. The award supports students with a \$250 scholarship.

For more information about the Student Peace Conference and Peace Awards, including links to workshop packets and a [photo album](#), please see the [event web page](#).

Besides giving the award to Chen, the Peace Studies Society also recognized two exceptional students for their contributions to peace: William Lee, an international studies major, for his work on human rights in North Korea, and Swati Kumar, a business major, for her work on effective altruism.

The Rotaract Club of OSU also sponsored its Peace Through Service Award at the conference, recognizing the Business Builders Club at Fisher College of Business for its Alleviating Poverty Through Entrepreneurship program.

The Student Peace Conference and Peace Awards was sponsored by the Mershon Center and Central Ohioans for Peace, with support from Ohio Council of Churches and Columbus Rotary.

About the winners

**Lauren Chen** is studying biomedical science at The Ohio State University. She co-founded a non-profit organization at Ohio State called The Supply. The organization is dedicated to empowering children living in the slums of Lenana, Kenya, to better their community through education and civic engagement. She organized a "Lunch for Lenana" campaign to send children to school in their communities, and a 5k Run for Global Awareness to raise funds to build the KevJumba Preparatory School in Nairobi. She also coordinated a Penpal Program between children in low-income districts of Columbus and the Lenana school children.

The Peace Studies Society chose Lauren to receive the 2014 Undergraduate Peace Award because of her outstanding contributions toward peace through her involvement. Her dedication and activism has encouraged peace at Ohio State and other communities. She is raising awareness and promoting peace through educating others. "Education is a call to action, and our education enables us to radically transform the communities around us so those without a voice can be heard, thereby creating a

more beautiful and peaceful world," she said.

**William Lee** is an international studies major, focusing on international relations and diplomacy with a minor in French. He works as a global ambassador to enhance student relations through active exchanges of cultural, social, and political values. As an involved student on campus, William has taken his time to raise awareness and activism for human rights in North Korea through his organization North Korea Future Research Organization. The Peace Studies Society is recognizing William for his contributions to bringing awareness to campus about human rights and actively working toward a more aware and peaceful campus.


**Swati Kumar** is a business major, focusing in economics with a minor in creative writing. She founded a student organization on campus called The High Impact Network (THINK) that is dedicated to spreading and furthering the concept of effective altruism. She also consulted several nonprofit organizations locally to improve their business outlook. As part of the Global Leadership Initiative she is dedicated to reducing intolerance and discrimination on campus by acting as a bridge to bring different groups of people together. The Peace Studies Society is recognizing Swati for her teaching work in El Salvador as well as her efforts to engage more Ohio State students in local and international issues.

In addition, the Rotaract Club of OSU will give its Peace Through Service award to the Business Builders Club for its Alleviating Poverty Through Entrepreneurship program, a student-led community development organization that promotes economic development and social entrepreneurship. APTE's annual summit is the largest, free, social entrepreneurship conference in the Midwest. The Business Builders Club is the official student organization of Ohio State's new Center for Entrepreneurship. Students run the club, but the center collaborates in the planning, funding, and hosting of Business Builders programs, events, and initiatives.

**About the Peace Studies Society**

The mission of the Peace Studies Society is to educate students interested in topics relevant to the peace and conflict negotiation field; to encourage positive social change and a just campus, community, and world through engaging in annual peace projects; and to honor Ohio State students that are contributing to a more peaceful world.

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